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He Is the First Politician to Be Nominated to Direct the C.I.A.

Mr. Bush Does Not Fit the Top-Spy Mold

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK

WASHINGTON—In a city where knowledge is power, the Director of Central Intelligence is a man of awesome power. He will know of world crisis before the President, or at least as soon; of oil trading in the Mideast and arms deals in Africa, of political shenanigans in Paris and intrigue in Istanbul.

There are those here who believe the President, even if he wanted to, could make no move in foreign affairs without the director learning of it.

No President since Dwight David Eisenhower has been entirely comfortable with his Director of Intelligence. The last two Presidents have been downright wary.

President Nixon once commissioned James Schlesinger Jr. to find out why the intelligence community did not seem to work very well. Mr. Nixon and Henry A. Kissinger privately complained that the intelligence agencies were "unresponsive" to their demands for knowledge or commands for action.

President Ford came into office in August, 1974, but the Director of Central Intelligence did not give him a full briefing on a devastating internal report of agency improprieties until some of them were published in The New York Times.

Many in the White House were said to be displeased that the same director, William E. Colby, has been speaking too freely and frankly to Congressional investigating committees. That is not a universal view, however; as one Representative put it last week, Mr. Colby is providing honest answers to precise questions, but is no help in determining which are the right questions.

Taking Political Command

Last week President Ford moved abruptly to take political command of the Central Intelligence Agency. He nominated as director George Bush, a former chairman of the Republican National Committee and currently head of the United States liaison office in Peking. It was a startling departure from the pattern.

Intelligence directors have been lawyers, businessmen, military men, professors or up-through-the-ranks intelligence officers, but they have not been politicians. Allen Dulles, Richard Helms and Mr. Colby are truly professional intelligence men, and in concert with the men they commanded. The only real outsider to hold the job was John McCone, who served under President Kennedy. A businessman of integrity, no one really ever questioned his fitness for the sensitive post.

No one is questioning Ambassador Bush's integrity; but several on Capitol Hill—for example, Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee—are anxious about any political figure being assigned to what Mr. Church called the "least political agency in Washington."

It is the question of knowledge and power. The President wants a man in this slot of deep loyalty to his administration so that he can better control the power. But others are worried that the vast intelligence apparatus—the electronic powers of the National Security Agency, the dossiers, the surveillances, the economic information—could be misused for partisan political purposes.

They want a man in the job who neither bows to the improper wishes of the President nor lets the Central Intelligence Agency operate as a "rogue elephant" thrashing about the world doing its own thing.

That is the second question about Mr. Bush. Is he tough enough to take command of an agency where secrecy and duplicity are by necessity tools, where the very secrecy has built a camaraderie that is suspicious of all outsiders?

When James Schlesinger, an academic before he entered government service, became director in 1973 he fired some 1,800 of the agency's employees, instituted the internal investigation that resulted in the disclosure of the improprieties now under Congressional investigation and issued enough unpleasant internal directives that his name is still spoken in anger in many agency circles.

Agency Is in Disarray

Mr. Bush, if he is confirmed by the Senate, may profit from Mr. Schlesinger's softening-up of the target and by the year of Congressional investigations. The agency is in disarray. The new director will not face the immutable "old boy" network that ran things despite him.

Instead, Mr. Bush will encounter an agency that, nearly everyone agrees, has a vital national security role, but is being asked to set out on a new, post-cold war tack. The agency will have to concentrate on intelligence gathering and analysis and not on secret wars and assassination plots.

The job could be a rewarding assignment. Most critics of government agree that the agency has attracted one of the most skillful and professional staffs in Washington. But the agency has never been a political stepping stone, and many Congressional sources suggest it would be better served by a long-term appointee who worked to mold a new agency than someone who eyes the job only as a launch pad for politics.

Mr. Ford himself made the job sound temporary last week when he told reporters that both Mr. Bush and Donald Rumsfeld, nominee for Secretary of Defense, would not be barred from consideration as Vice-Presidential candidates.

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